

POST
NEWS ANALYSIS 1-0985
CHRIS KERN

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JUNE POLITICS

ANNCR:

SOME OBSERVATIONS NOW ON THE CURRENT PHASE OF THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN THAT IS TAKING PLACE HERE IN THE UNITED STATES FROM CHRIS KERN.

VOICE:

THIS IS A SORT OF IN-BETWEEN TIME IN THE AMERICAN CAMPAIGN FOR PRESIDENT. THE PRIMARY ELECTIONS ARE OVER BUT THE TWO MAJOR PARTY NOMINATING CONVENTIONS ARE STILL SEVERAL WEEKS AWAY.

IN THE CASE OF THE DEMOCRATS, THE PRIARIES HAVE BEEN DECISIVE. JIMMY CARTER WILL GO TO THE NEW YORK CONVENTION WITH MORE THAN ENOUGH DELEGATES PLEDGED TO VOTE FOR HIM TO WIN THE NOMINATION.

THERE WILL BE PLENTY OF SPECULATION ABOUT MR. CARTER'S CHOICE OF A VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AND THERE WILL PROBABLY BE SOME DEBATE ABOUT THE PARTY'S RULES AND PROGRAM. BUT THE BIGGEST NEWS AT THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION COULD TURN OUT TO BE THE NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT STRIKE WHICH TRANSPORTATION WORKERS THERE ARE THREATENING AND WHICH IN TURN WOULD THREATEN THE PARTY LEADERS' PLANS FOR AN UNUSUALLY ORDERLY CONVENTION.

MR. CARTER IS LOOKING AND ACTING VERY MUCH LIKE A MAJOR PARTY CANDIDATE ALREADY, AND THE GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN COULD BEGIN RIGHT NOW IF THE REPUBLICANS WEREN'T SO DIVIDED.

PRESIDENT FORD EXPECTED TO BE IN MISTER CARTER'S POSITION AT THIS POINT. IN FACT, HE EXPECTED TO BE WATCHING THE DEMOCRATS FIGHTING OVER THEIR NOMINATION. INSTEAD, MR. FORD IS INVOLVED IN A NOMINATION BATTLE OF HIS OWN THAT IS EVERY BIT AS UNDECIDED AS THE DEMOCRATIC RACE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE.

BOTH MR. FORD AND RONALD REAGAN ARE CLAIMING THAT THEY WILL ARRIVE AT THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION AT KANSAS CITY WITH ENOUGH DELEGATES TO WIN THE NOMINATION. BUT SURVEYS BY THE PRESS INDICATE THAT THE TWO REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES WILL GO INTO THE CONVENTION WITH JUST ABOUT THE SAME NUMBER OF VOTES.

THAT WILL MAKE FOR AN EXCITING TELEVISION SHOW, BUT IT'S BAD POLITICS FOR A MINORITY PARTY, AND MR. FORD -- WHO IS AHEAD IF EITHER REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE IS-- HAS PUBLICLY COMPLAINED THAT THE REPUBLICANS ARE HURTING THEIR CHANCES TO HOLD ON TO THE WHITE HOUSE IN NOVEMBER BY HAVING THIS NOMINATION RACE.

MR. REAGAN PREDICTABLY DISPUTES THAT. HE IS ARGUING NOW THAT HE WOULD RUN AS WELL AGAINST MR. CARTER AS MR. FORD WOULD. THE LATEST GALLUP (PUBLIC OPINION) POLL INDICATES THAT MR. FORD IS STILL THE STRONGER CANDIDATE, BUT NO ONE KNOWS IF THAT WILL BE THE CASE WHEN THE CONVENTION MEETS, AND MR. REAGAN HAS BEEN MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN ANYONE EXPECTED HIM TO BE BEFORE THE CAMPAIGN STARTED.